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Mr. Rennie adds to the curious particulars already known, concerning the manner in which grasshoppers produce and increase their sound. They apply the hind shank to the thigh, rubbing it smartly against the wing-case, and alternately the right and left legs. This fiddling, however, would not be heard at any great distance, were it not for a sort of drum at their side, which is formed with membranes suited to increase and echo the sound. The instrument upon which the male cricket plays,—for, unlike the usual order of nature, the female is silent,—is a pair of rough strings in the wing-cases, which they rub against each other. White of Selborne endeavored to naturalize field crickets near his house, and Mr. Rennie to introduce house crickets to his hearth; both were unsuccessful, the insects probably having doubts whether their first welcome would ripen into lasting hospitality.

These are certainly very interesting works, and do credit to the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, of which they form a part, as well as to the ability of Mr. Rennie, as a naturalist and a writer. We do not expect sudden nor striking effects from thus multiplying works of popular instruction, but when they are sown broad-cast, as they are in the present day, some will take root, and produce harvests which the world does not know. To supply means of happiness,—to inspire a taste and talent for observation,—to teach men to pass through the world, not as strangers, but as interested to know every thing about them, though it may not be so splendid a service as many other scientific exertions, is certainly the one which will give the philosopher his most enviable and enduring fame.

ART. X.—*Bigelow's Travels in Malta and Sicily.*

Travels in Malta and Sicily, with Sketches of Gibraltar, in Eighteen Hundred and Twenty-Seven. By ANDREW BIGELOW, Author of 'Leaves from a Journal in North Britain and Ireland.' Boston. 1832.

It is well observed by Pliny, that history, however written, is always delightful. *Historia, quoquo modo scripta, delectat.* The same remark may be applied to travels; and it may be added with regard to both these classes of works, that they are always instructive. They are the true antidote to the mass of

corrupt and corrupting matter, which is continually poured forth upon the reading world, under the name of novels. They give a correct picture of life and nature, of which novels and romances exhibit a caricature. When prepared in a good spirit and with tolerable ability, they vastly increase the common stock of useful information, clear away many thick clouds of national, sectional or ecclesiastical prejudice, and brighten the chain of brotherhood that links together all the various portions of the human race. Even when they are written,—as is the case, for example, with most of the British travels in this country,—with a malignant intention to misrepresent, or at least an evident willingness to look at every thing upon the wrong side, their effect in the last result is by no means unfavorable. Even in this case they supply useful hints, which will be turned to account by judicious men, and create a wholesome re-action in public opinion, which ultimately places the truth in a strong and clear light. The calumnies of the British travellers and reviewers probably did more than any other single cause, to revive among us the national spirit of the old revolutionary period, which, after partially declining during the prevalence of the ancient political divisions, displayed itself again with so much power and freshness after the termination of the last war.

For these reasons, we have often regretted, that our intelligent citizens who visit foreign countries,—and there is, probably, no portion of the dwellers on the earth's surface, who are more addicted to wandering,—have not more frequently favored us on their return with accounts of their pilgrimages. They probably, in many cases, refrain from doing this under the impression, that the preparation of a book will require extensive additional researches, and a vast expenditure of time and labor, which they cannot conveniently afford. But this opinion is founded on a mistaken notion of the qualities that are most desirable in accounts of travels. As a general rule, the nearer they approach the form of a mere journal, the more distinctly and accurately they give the impression, which was made at the moment on the traveller's mind by the objects he has seen, the better they are. Other persons are as able as he is to generalize and speculate upon the facts that have fallen under his observation; but no one else has noticed these particular facts, and if not recorded by himself, they are lost forever. We find accordingly, that travels, executed in this way, are more entertaining and popular, as well as more useful than any other

works of the class. As proofs and illustrations of this remark, may be mentioned the 'Year in Spain, by a young American,' and Mr. Bigelow's 'Leaves from a Journal, in North Britain and Ireland.' Both these works have been very favorably received abroad as well as at home, and the success they have met with will doubtless bring forth a variety of other publications of a similar kind, from the same or other authors. The wayfaring mode of life, pursued by Lieut. Slidell, will supply him with materials for many a future *Year*, which we trust he will not fail to work up with his wonted grace and spirit. Mr. Bigelow has already embodied in the work before us, the results of a voyage to the Mediterranean, undertaken subsequently to his former excursion, and as we understand partly for the improvement of his health. His course led him through scenes which, though often described, can never lose their interest, and which are associated with the most important events in sacred and secular history. He has not been mistaken, in supposing that an account of them from his pen would be received with satisfaction by the public.

In this publication, as in his former one, Mr. Bigelow has kept in view what, as we have said already, we consider the leading rule for this kind of writing. He gives distinctly and particularly his own observations upon men and things, and even preserves the form of a journal, under which he originally recorded them. He has, however, judiciously avoided the dryness and formality to which this form very often leads, as in the case of the worthy Mussulman pilgrim, whose travels we noticed in a former article. If he has erred at all, it is perhaps in occasionally introducing matter which, though in itself not uninteresting, is irrelevant to the course of the narrative. The style is animated and generally correct, though at times a little too ambitious. The tone of thinking is manly and liberal. It exhibits a pretty strong tincture of national feeling in politics and religion, but rarely if ever in an offensive way. The author has evidently studied with attention the history and geography of the places which he visited, and, without overloading his pages with the results of his inquiries, writes under the advantage of an accurate knowledge of his subject. We can recommend the work as one which contains a mass of useful information, as well as a fund of liberal and rational entertainment, for the intelligent reader.

Mr. Bigelow begins with an account of his voyage across the Atlantic, and of his arrival at Gibraltar, where he made a

short stay. He describes in some detail the moral and physical peculiarities of this singular spot. Proceeding up the Mediterranean, he next conducts us to Malta, where he passed some weeks, and to which he devotes a considerable portion of the book. From Malta he went to Sicily, which forms the subject of the concluding chapters. Such is the general outline of the contents of this work, the character of which will best be shewn by a few extracts. The following passage describes in a lively and picturesque manner the landing at Gibralter, and the general aspect of the population.

‘The Mole was piled with merchandise of all descriptions, and buyers and venders, masters and clerks, sailors, porters, and draymen, were promiscuously mixed. The solemn looks, quaint dress, and sonorous language of the Spanish portion of these groups chiefly arrested my attention. They formed generally the humbler and by far the most numerous class. The strong, well formed horses, which drew their ponderous wagons, were samples of the once famed and still valuable Andalusian breed, and the trappings and housings of uncouth and fantastic materials which literally loaded them, indicated the pride with which their masters still regarded them. Having refreshed the boat’s crew at a neighboring stall, which displayed a tempting variety of oranges and other fruits, the products of this delicious clime, I was glad to escape from the scene of noise and justling and hubbub, and to elbow my way to the water-port. There I met the United States’ consul, who had politely rode down to greet me, and insure a pass, the right of which is always rigidly questioned. Under the escort of a guide, which this gentleman provided in addition to his other civilities, I again set forth to thread the mazes of this straitened town, in quest of the “traveller’s home.”

‘Proceeding from the Mole by the only outlet, a long vaulted passage through walls of solid masonry, crowded with pedestrians vociferating in divers tongues, and carts whose rumbling wheels completed the almost stunning noise, I entered a military square, which exhibited a moving scene scarcely less animated than that I had just left. Soldiers were hurrying to and fro, many of them busy in preparations for their speedy embarkation for Portugal. The cipher on their equipments told their respective regiments,—the royal artillery, the twenty-third, forty-third and sixty-fourth of the line. Among these brave fellows I was glad to notice a few in the truly martial dress of the Scotch highlanders, with their plaid kilts, tartan hose and proud bonnets and plumes. From this quarter, my guide conducted me into the heart of the town, through streets which elsewhere would be termed lanes and

alleys; and these were all filled with passing multitudes, men, women, and children, sailors and military, horses and carts, dogs, goats and asses. At length we entered Church-street, the main thoroughfare through the town, and which in width and other *comforts* may rival, but not surpass, old Ann-street in Boston. Fronting on this and forming a corner of a small open space, called the Commercial Square, stands the King's Arms Hotel, a house of respectable pretensions, inasmuch as it professes to be the best in the garrison. Thither I was conducted, and the portly landlord having promised me all the comforts his inn affords, I was soon settled and have reason to be satisfied with my accommodations. Calls, and a hasty survey of other portions of the town, occupied the remainder of the day.'

'Leaving the church, I found the streets filled with gay and moving crowds. The weather was mild and inviting, and people of all ages and conditions were tempted abroad. Spanish females of the lower orders were distinguished by scarlet cloaks, which were not ungracefully worn. A hood at the top might serve the purpose of a bonnet, but it was seldom drawn up. Ladies of Spanish birth were clad for the most part in the English costume, save the attire and ornaments of the head. There was this peculiarity in common with them and the lower orders, namely, the absence of bonnets. In place of these, veils were invariably worn, chiefly of black and figured lace. They were square, and being doubled, were drawn over the crown of the head a little in advance of their combs. Their hair was much braided, and it clustered in profusion round their olive brows,—leaving enough of the beautiful swell of their high foreheads exposed to an admirer's gaze. Their eyes are uniformly of a piercing black, rather small, and peculiarly arch and significant in expression. They possess a mobility, if I may so speak, such as no dark-eyed damsels of New England know how to practise. The head is seldom turned to gaze on a stranger, but the eye moves as the object passes, till the latter is completely gone by,—moves too, as though it were capable of making an entire revolution upon its pivot, and would look out of a window behind. I can easily understand the witchery of such an eye, to one willing to yield to its fascinations. It seems possessed of every variety of expression, from a melting, yet seductive softness, to the beaming eloquence of an impassioned brilliancy. In stature they are seldom above the middle height, and their forms, as a general rule, incline to the *embonpoint*. They walk with a vibrating movement not becoming, for it looks too much like the studied air of voluptuousness. All the females, whether high or low, young or old, were provided with fans, which they occasionally

employed to screen their faces from the sun, but more commonly used as a mere plaything. At least, while it was an appendage which none thought they could dispense with, it would puzzle one to conjecture what else it really was meant for. The complexion of the ladies is generally a pale olive, with a slight suffusion of dusky red; while that of the poorer classes is deeply embrowned to an almost tawny hue, by their more common exposure to the suns of this fervid clime.

‘As for the men, the more genteel ranks dress much after the English mode. A few Spanish cloaks are seen, but most of their nationality must be sought in their features and mien. In these there is no mistake. The Spaniard is *toujours le même*. Men in humbler life, however, retain pertinaciously their national or rather sectional costumes. The natives of the neighboring provinces of Andalusia, Murcia, and Grenada, appear in characteristic dresses. Broad brimmed hats, with edges slightly and uniformly rolled, ornamented with velvet tufts and other decorations,—vests and jerkins, with a profusion of cord and bell buttons,—tight small-clothes of black velvet, with rows of gilt buttons the entire length of the outer seams,—and long gaiters of divers hues and textures, are among the more obvious peculiarities.’

The celebrated Rock of Gibraltar is more minutely and accurately described, than in any other account which has fallen under our observation, but the great length of the description must prevent us from extracting it. The following passage gives a pleasing picture of the appearance of the little island of Pantellaria, as seen from the ship in its progress up the Mediterranean.

‘*Jan. 30. 1 P. M.* I have just descended from deck, after enjoying one of the sweetest spectacles which ever blessed my eyes. It was another gaze on the verdant and picturesque beauties of Pantellaria,—a long, and alas, a parting gaze. But previously to sketching these, as they appeared under other and more advantageous circumstances than on the antecedent day, I must go back and note a few preliminary incidents.

‘The gale last night was very surly. The friendly island did all it could to shelter us, but the sea and wind tossed us most ungraciously. The ship’s timbers creaked with many a rude shock, and the sweeping blasts whistled through our blocks and shrouds. What with tacking and drifting,—standing off and on, nautically speaking,—we fell considerably to the leeward; and when morning broke, struggling to look forth from under its cloudy mantle, Pantellaria was effectually hid from us as though it had foundered, and not we, beneath the angry floods.

'About sunrise, the storm subsided. "The heart of the gale was broke," as a tar, soused with the plashing spray, was heard to express himself. The sea, very differently from an Atlantic roll, soon abated, and prepared to compose itself to rest. At eight, we made sail and once more hove up for the "bonnie" isle, which lay directly in our proper track. The baffling state of the winds, which having spent themselves in one point, seemed irresolute from what quarter next they should agree to breeze, kept us back for a while in our course. Sailing gradually to the east, at length we again descried Pantellaria, looking like a green sea-gem in a setting of blue. The sun shortly after burst forth with splendor, as if to beam a complacent smile on that sweet isle.

'And how fair it looked when at last we reached it, and glided once more along its emerald shores! The verdure under a sunny sky assumed a deeper and livelier tint, and vegetation wore a richness far surpassing its appearance on the day preceding. Orchards, in the full pride of bloom, displayed their thousand varied hues. In every garden, the almond was seen profusely decked with its damask flowers. The sweetest perfumes were wafted from the expanded blossoms of the citron and orange; and all nature luxuriated under the balmy influences of a soft and roseate morn. The waves, now reduced to gentle undulations, as they stole to the shore—heaved by a zephyr which rather sighed than breathed—broke upon its margin in snowy circlets, like chains of "orient pearl."

'I am not expatiating on mere fancied beauties. The description which I attempt is poor, compared with the genuine impressions which the scene beheld spontaneously called up. We were often scarce a bow-shot from the shore, for the deep waters around it permitted so nigh an approach in perfect safety. No one position on land perhaps could have been so favorable for the view, as none would probably have combined the variety of features which we contemplated in our near and leisurely passage by the island.

'The town, being built at the northwest extremity of Pantellaria, was approached first. Sailing slowly past it, and its pretty Almeda which I had previously overlooked, we observed the population, as on the former occasion,—some busy, but others and the most who were abroad, strolling with a careless air, or seated in social intercourse under the shade of flowering trees. In the vineyards and olive groves, some peasantry were employed, and along the highways leading from the gates of the town towards Cala Tramontana and St. Gaetano, muleteers and pedestrians of either sex, were occasionally passing to and fro, giving

liveliness to the general scene. As we rounded the northern point of the harbor and left the town, the landscape varied, but only to exhibit fresh charms. The monastery of St. Theodore looked down upon us from its green and woody elevation. Successive cots, romantically situated, came momentarily into view. Several little vales of exquisite loveliness put in their claims to notice. Occasionally we could see a limpid brook, stealing through the fresh grass to mingle with the waters which bathed these fairy shores. The country, in short, was spread out as a vast garden, divided into numberless enclosures, the circumscribed limits of which denoted the value and fertility of the smallest spots. Altogether it was a scene of enchantment. The isle of Cythæra could not look fairer.

‘The island anciently had a different look, I mean in the matter of loveliness. Seneca mentions it as a rough and barren spot in his day. It is probable that the volcano had not then been long extinguished, and its fertile soil and natural resources have since been mostly created, or perhaps developed. Pantellaria was the Cossyra of antiquity. Its history records varied fortunes. Like many nobler possessions, it has passed successively under the sceptre of the masters of the world, sharing the immediate fate of Sicily almost uniformly. At present, it is a dependence on that crown, and belongs with the title of principality to the house of Requinio. It formed for a long time, a portion of the dowry of the queens of Sicily. It is only arbitrarily denominated a part of Europe, as it lies quite as near to the African continent, and if the lords of the old, or rather the civilized world, dwelt on the other shore, they would consider it doubtless as an appendage of that quarter of the globe.’

Our author was placed under quarantine on his arrival at Malta, and dwells with some feeling upon the fatigue which he suffered during his abode in the Lazaretto. In other respects, he found his reception in the highest degree hospitable and satisfactory. The following passage contains a lively view of the principal street of the city of La Valetta, the capital of the island, and the external appearance and habits of the people.

‘Strada Reale (King street,) is the main avenue of Valetta. It is tolerably broad, and lined with noble buildings. The parallel streets are mostly narrow. Vicary’s, where I am lodged, is built on the square formed by Strada Reale and Strada Stretta, (literally, ‘the street which is called strait,’) and fronts on St. George’s piazza, a spacious court before the old palace of the Grand Masters. The windows of my apartments are provided

with the general appendage of balconies, and from the central position of the house, I have many materials of observation without stirring abroad.

‘These balconies are a curious feature in the Maltese houses. They are of all sizes and patterns. Some are very uncouth, but their oddness is not disagreeable. The stone work is fantastically carved, and the frame above is frequently glazed, and painted with various colors, such as green, blue and slate. Some of the balconies are like the segment of a ship’s round house, grappled to the sides of the tenements. They are provided frequently with blinds as well as windows, which swing open from hinges fixed above, and not laterally. I have seen several of the size of little parlors. They are neatly finished within, ornamented with paintings and flowers, and furnished with seats and a table. Members of families spend whole hours in them, and receive visitors there, or pursue their avocations and amusements, the chief of which however seems to be that of gazing on the passing crowd. The smaller balconies are scarcely bigger than sentry-boxes. Two or three persons can just wedge themselves in, and there they will sit like statues for the half day together. One man I observed yesterday in a little balcony of *Strada Stretta*,—wrapped in a cloak, and his swarthy features half hid by a low slouched hat,—who was fixed to his seat for four good hours. His sole earthly object was that of scrutinizing the motley multitudes that passed beneath. He looked like Diogenes in his tub.

‘Such excrescences give a strange bulging shape to the fronts of the houses; especially where, as in some cases, they project half way over the street. They are an anomaly in architecture which I have nowhere else seen. But the streets themselves are often oddly constructed. Those on the sides of the rocky promontory, instead of being gently sloped and made passable for wheels, are spaced off like stairways. *St. Paolo* is one; both the street and side walks are graduated by this clumsy method; and the pedestrian who ascends it is doomed, for no crime of his own, to much the same penance as that of stepping a tread-mill. There is another peculiarity which arrests attention. The lower windows of the houses are protected by iron grates. The strength of the bars shows that something more than the glass is meant to be guarded. The frames protrude several inches from the walls, and give a monastic, or rather a prison-like look to the edifices. Their purpose is not to prevent the inmates of houses from breaking out, but others from breaking in; and, on the whole, it does not furnish so pleasing an augury of the character of the population as might be wished.

‘The people appear to be a hardy and capable race. The

men have generally spare figures, a little under the middle stature, but very muscular and active. Their faces are naturally swarthy, they are sunburnt by the universal custom of wearing unshaded caps, either cotton or woollen. The color of their skins is the same as that of the inhabitants of the neighboring States of Barbary. Indeed there is much in the looks of the people which denote a similar origin, particularly in their short crisped hair, and a certain flatness of the nose. It is said that their language is so nearly the same with that spoken on the Barbary shore, that the natives perfectly understand one another.

'The dress of the Maltese is very singular, but as I have no time to enter into minutiae just now, I will confine myself to that of the women. When abroad, they are all arrayed in black. They put on over their other dress a robe or loose skirt of that color, brought high on the bosom, and in place of bonnets their heads are covered with a black silk mantle which invests their shoulders, and descends half way behind. The part which covers the head is furnished with a piece of whalebone inserted in the hem, which keeps it in position, and prevents the silk from dropping over the eyes. One hand placed inside, is always necessary to hold together the sides of the scarf in front; and the other is often hid under its folds, only a fore-finger being suffered to peep out through an opening left for the purpose. Of course, under such mufflers little can be seen of the beauties of form or feature, if a Maltese nymph happen to possess them; the eyes and a moving pall-black figure are all that can be distinguished. But sometimes the fair one deigns to exhibit her face to a curious gazer, in place of engrossing to herself the privilege of seeing; and features good humored, rather pleasing than handsome, and irradiated by a pair of fine sparkling eyes, are displayed to the beholder. The complexion is a dark olive, but partaking a little too much of a sort of mulatto tinge. The mantle is obviously borrowed, or rather it has descended, from a distant age and people. It answers to the veil of Eastern ladies.

'In La Valetta, while the accommodations of residence for a portion of the inhabitants are very ample and convenient, those of others are proportionably straitened and pinched. I have said something of this in speaking of the general effect of the houses, but the topic is deserving of further notice. In form and mass, the buildings are uncommonly stately; and at night when the streets are quiet and the population is within doors, a stranger, passing through Valetta, might take it for a city of antique palaces. The founders of these noble houses studied the comfort of coolness in their construction,—the walls of drawing, dining and even common sitting-rooms being often from thirty to

forty feet in height. A tall man in such apartments is in little danger of striking his head against the ceiling. In fact, their great comparative height and spaciousness give a diminutive look to the human stature.

‘For the benefit of the poorer classes forming the multitude, these huge buildings are often made to accommodate many small families. As a single room on the ground-floor sometimes serves for a little household, many doors open on the street, and the light and air are admitted to such apartments only through those passages. A white cotton curtain is drawn before the entrances, and when the doors are themselves closed, the rooms are ventilated by means of little glasses fixed in the upper pannels and made to swing back.

‘It may be said that such abodes must be cheerless. Undoubtedly ; but then they are little used by day. The Maltese are not domestic bodies. The men are always abroad ; and the women, if they are not at mass or roving about the streets, will stand or sit for hours in their door-ways, observing the busy crowds, and ready to salute, or chat with, a passing acquaintance. If any thing of a domestic nature requires to be done, as cooking or the like, it is performed abroad. They have no fire-places in their houses, and the culinary apparatus is a portable stone stove shaped like a jar, with a grate on the top, which they set just outside of the foot pavement in the street, when they have occasion to light it. Every morning, about eight, these little stoves are brought forth before their houses and with a few coals or splinters they kindle a small fire, and the preparations for their frugal breakfasts go on. As they are ranged in regular file along the line of the curb-stone, they make, together with the groups around them, an odd appearance.

Owing to the mixed character of the population and their diversified pursuits, meals are taken at very different hours. The common people dine, or eat the morsel which serves them instead, at eleven or half past eleven o'clock. Ecclesiastics, some merchants, and respectable private families of plain habits, take dinner at one. The more fashionable gentry observe in common the hour of four ; but when invitations are sent out, the time is fixed an hour or two later. This sometimes confuses the evening's arrangements. I have been asked to take tea in one family at half past five, when I was engaged at another house to join a dinner party, at six.

All sorts of trades and occupations are conducted in the streets,—tailoring, cobbling, trunk-making, basket-weaving and others. A shoemaker at a corner near my residence has put up a few boards for a stall, and there he works the livelong day, a

pattern of industry. His accommodations are so contracted that, in drawing a stitch, he could not possibly have space enough, without borrowing room from the street. At another corner, by the square of St. John, a barber has set up business. But if he has the sign of a shop, he has no shop to his sign. He works manfully in the open air, and a merry fellow he is. With a chair, the requisite tools, and a small looking-glass stuck against the street wall, he is as independent as any knight of the basin. I have frequently in passing admired his dexterity in plying the razor, and enjoyed his good humor; and have sometimes laughed at seeing a full-bearded Maltese submitting to the operation, braced in the old roundabout, with an attitude so prim and so grave,—lathered to his eyes, and his chin bolstered on a rag of a towel,—exhibiting, to be sure, in such a place and with all the hubbub about him, a pretty droll figure. When the barber is out of duty, he stands and takes note of the passengers, and if he sees, as he often may, an unlucky wight with a beard *mal-à-propos*,—perhaps a week's growth,—he kindly intimates it, and invites the hermit, if his word should be doubted, to survey his chin in the glass. He is then sure of a fee for 'mowing.' Sometimes he cracks his jokes upon a Turk or a Moor, but then his humor does not seem to be equally relished.'

Malta, as is well known to all, is the Melita of Scripture, and the scene of the shipwreck of St. Paul, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. This circumstance has naturally led the inhabitants to select that Saint as their peculiar patron, and a solemn festival is annually celebrated in his honor, which our author was fortunate enough to see.

'*Feb. 10.*—By one of those chances which sometimes turn up unexpectedly in favor of a tourist, I find myself in Malta at the era of the great religious celebration in honor of St. Paul. The present day is set apart in the calendar as the anniversary of the apostle's shipwreck; and an opportunity has thus been afforded me of witnessing the most striking ecclesiastical pageant, which popery has here instituted. The event commemorated was suitable for solemn observance of some sort; but whether the ceremonies which were practised were the most appropriate in reference to moral uses, is a matter of question.

'The festival commenced by a prelude last evening, when the church of St. Paul was splendidly illuminated; but the grand display was reserved for to-day. After mass, celebrated this afternoon with unusual pomp, the preparations for a great solemn procession took effect. All the monkish fraternities in Valetta

joined in the ceremony, and the whole machinery of the hierarchy was put in requisition to make it stately and impressive. The citizens were not behind in their zeal to testify respect for the solemnity. The front of the lofty houses along the principal streets through which the procession was to pass, were hung with drapery of gorgeous hues, trailing to the pavement. Strada Paolo, with its proud old structures, of an architecture grand though fantastic, looked magnificently with these decorations. Windows and balconies were filled with spectators, and a crowd of devotees occupied the square and hung upon the avenues connecting with the church whence the procession was to issue.

‘First choosing a station among the last, I was placed to see with advantage the order of the opening ceremonial. The wide-spread portals of the church, St. Paolo, disclosed the interior lighted with innumerable tapers; and they were needed, notwithstanding the hour, for clouds of incense filled the spacious nave and aisles. The various monastic orders, all duly marshalled, displayed, as they successively appeared, their robes of pomp and state, except the Franciscans and Capuchins, whose vows of poverty permit no change of apparel on occasions the most memorable. These walked bare-headed, with sandalled feet, clothed with coarse brown cloaks, or rather frocks with cowls, a girdle of rope about their loins, no linen to their collars, and their rosaries and crucifixes of cheap and homely make. They served as foils to the fathers who followed in sumptuous array and with lordly bearing, and their downcast looks and humble mien lost nothing of interest, in contrast with the ostentatious air and demeanor of their successors. Each society was distinguished by a banner splendidly decorated, exhibiting the likeness of its founder or a painting of its patron saint, and it was curious to observe that even the poor disciples of St. Francis vied in the showiness of that emblem, with the richest and most aspiring of their fellow orders. Crosses, dazzlingly gilt, were borne aloft in the procession. Censers, smoking with incense, were carried in the respective companies and waved from time to time in the air; and those who were not employed in bearing banner, cross or censer, were furnished with tapers, which shone but dimly indeed in the broad light of day.

‘When the van of the procession, extending up the street St. Paolo, had reached the summit, it paused to give time for the main appendage of the pageant to be produced. This, it was easy to perceive by the eager looks of the crowd around, was expected with intense solicitude. It was no less than the image of the apostle Paul, large as life, and fine as carving, and gilding, and frippery could make it, which in no long time was lifted

from its recess and brought forth to view. It stood on a broad platform, borne on the brawny shoulders of a number of men, who bowed under the heavy burden. The apostle was paraded in full pontificals, and in the attitude of preaching. His raiment was widely different from that which he probably brought ashore with him, when cast by the waves upon yon coast,—a sign perhaps, that the barbarous people would still show him no little kindness. It resembled a tissue of pure gold. His head was covered with a sort of cardinal's hat, I mean in shape, but it was gilt all over like his drapery. His features,—but I will not describe them. They shocked all my notions of the looks of the poor tent-maker of Tarsus.

'The procession moved with solemn chaunt. The air was redolent with the fuming incense. Bells "tolled out their mighty peal;" and with the symbols already named,—the waving banners, the gleaming crosses, the flowing vestments, and that gorgeous shape of the apostle,

"High in the midst, exalted as a god,"—

nothing was wanting to grace the passing *cortège*. Considered as a spectacle, the effect was certainly imposing.

'To behold it with greater advantage, I mounted, next, to a balcony in a friend's house which commanded a full view of the principal street, the appearance of which was scarcely less striking than the moving show which perambulated through it. Crowds were seen bending as the figure of the saint slowly advanced, and even the groups in the windows and verandahs dropped on their knees, or bowed in obeisance whilst the object was passing. The procession having moved through Strada Reale, defiled into a range of parallel streets, and returning to the church St. Paolo, delivered back in safety its precious charge to the shrine whence it had been taken.'

We have omitted a few sentences in this passage, which are fitted to convey a rather disparaging impression of the effect of such ceremonies, and of the spirit in which they are conducted. In this and other parts of his work, Mr. Bigelow, though disposed in the main to regard the usages and institutions of other nations with great liberality, has, we think, given way to a not unnatural prejudice, resulting from the peculiar form of religion in which he has been educated, and of which he has been an ordained teacher. When he has occasion to direct his attention to the Catholic religion, he is apt to keep in view more particularly those points which, separately taken, may appear like abuses, but which yet may not be without their value as

constituent parts of a great and consistent whole. The object of this system was to place the individual, as far as might be, at every period of his life and in every part of his conduct, whether public or private, important or trivial, sportive or serious, under the influence of religion. Religion received the infant at its birth, and marked him by the sacrament of baptism as a spiritual and immortal being; watched over the earliest movements of his young passions through the confessional; directed the schools and colleges where he received his intellectual training; sanctified with her presence his union with the chosen partner of his life; presided at all his amusements and festivals; opened her convents and hospitals for the relief of his distresses; stood by him at every important crisis in the course of his career, and finally whispered consolation at his pillow in the last dark hours of dissolving nature. Such was the general plan of the Catholic religion, and few will deny that it was carried into effect with singular ability and success. Each particular regulation, considered in itself, was susceptible of abuse and was often abused. The disgust and indignation excited by these abuses finally overcame, in a great part of Christendom, the reverence which was felt by the people for the system itself, and produced the Reformation. If, as Protestants, we believe that the good resulting from this event has, on the whole, exceeded the evil, we must yet allow that the Reformers,—in their anxiety to correct abuses,—swept away many institutions of the highest importance and utility, as they destroyed many architectural monuments of inestimable value, in their zeal to remove from the churches and convents, all traces of idolatry. To allude to the case immediately before us, it is obvious enough, that the intervention of religion in the public festivals would sometimes present her image under ignoble forms and degrading associations; but it is equally clear, on the other hand, that her presence on these occasions tends very strongly to restrain the excesses to which they naturally lead, and that it was a necessary part of the great plan, on which the forms of the Catholic religion were constructed.

The Island of Malta is chiefly remarkable, from having been for several centuries the residence of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who retreated to this place on their expulsion from Rhodes by the Turks, and occupied it until it was finally seized upon by Napoleon on his way to Egypt. The British afterwards took it, but engaged at the treaty of Amiens

in 1802 to restore it to France ; and it was ostensibly on account of the breach of this engagement, that the rupture took place the next year, which brought on the counter-revolution. We rather regret, that Mr. Bigelow did not introduce a succinct sketch of the fortunes of this celebrated order of knighthood. They constitute a curious episode in the history of modern Europe, and would have been in a great measure new to the general reader.

The following passage describes the appearance of Mount *Ætna* and the coast of *Sicily*, as seen in a remarkably clear day from the Island of *Malta*. Mr. Bigelow nowhere appears to greater advantage, than in descriptions of striking and curious local scenery.

‘As the air was uncommonly clear, I sent the servant to the terrace as soon as he made his appearance in the morning, to look out for Mount *Ætna*. Usually the mountain is only discernible, if at all, very early in the day, and though I have often gazed in its direction, I have hitherto failed in obtaining a good view of it. In an air line, its summit is distant from *Malta* at least one hundred and fifty miles.

‘The messenger came down with a countenance brightened with joy and surprise, and said that not only *Ætna* was clearly visible, but a large extent of the coast of *Sicily*. The truth of his report I soon verified, for going above, I saw with wonderful distinctness, with the naked eye, both the mountain and a line of shore, that stretched to the east and west for many degrees of the horizon. Cape *Passaro*, the proximate point of *Sicily*, is not nearer than sixty miles. Thence the coast bears away for many leagues in a deep curve towards *Syracuse* ; yet the whole seemed scarcely a dozen miles distant. This may be explained, partly by the extraordinary clearness of the air, but chiefly on the principles of atmospheric looming. For, considering the position of the eye at *Malta*, and the distance of a great part of the land which appeared, it was not possible that so much of the latter could be seen, unless raised and magnified according to some of the phenomena of optical reflection. I am satisfied in my own mind, at any rate, of the truth of this remark as applied to the remoter part of the coast, the lowness of which, calculating on the intervening sphericity of the earth, must have otherwise screened it altogether.

‘*Ætna*, nevertheless, needed no aid from looming to render itself visible, provided, as in this case, the air was very clear. The wonder was, that it should have appeared so distinct and near, and that its bold and majestic profile should have been so

perfectly drawn on the distant horizon. The mountain rose far in the background, and seemed all at once to upheave its gigantic form. To the eye, it looked thrice as high as the coast. Its top and sides were covered with snow. The figure of the mountain was an imperfect cone, rising from a very broad base. The upper line was irregular, declining from west to east, and indented very strikingly in one point, which could hardly be mistaken for the crater. On a part of the eastern front a dark patch was visible, which looked like a huge chasm or precipice. The rest of the mountain, with the exception of the black indenting line of the top, was almost dazzlingly white; for, lying to the north of Malta, the sun shone full upon its hoary steeps. No smoke could be seen, though in periods of great irruption it has been discerned, I understand, even from so vast a distance.

‘I have touched upon some of the features of this remote landscape, but to communicate the effect of the spectacle is impossible. It was truly sublime. Every accessory was present to heighten the emotions which it enkindled,—the splendor of the morning, the balmy softness of the air, the profound repose of the sea, and the beauty of the heavens, robed as they were in their richest cerulean hue. The hum of voices from the streets rose in a subdued murmur, to the height of the lofty terrace on which I stood; and birds, some of strange song, but all of great sweetness, poured forth their various melodies.’

After a residence of a few weeks at Malta, Mr. Bigelow took his departure in a Sicilian brigantine for Syracuse, where he arrived the next day. The latter half of the volume is occupied by the observations of the author in Sicily, and is, we think, even more interesting than the former. The following passage contains a description of the Tomb of Archimedes and of the curious grotto called the Ear of Dionysius.

‘The road, winding up a gentle slope, at length intersected another, called the Street of Sepulchres, from its leading in a narrow defile between hills faced on either side with ancient tombs. Near the entrance of this passage, and about one hundred yards from the spot traditionally remembered as the place of the Agragian Gate, stands the tomb of Archimedes. The locality agrees very well with the description given of it by Cicero. The ancients were in the habit of burying their dead without the walls of their cities; and the sepulchres of Syracuse came up to its very gates on this quarter. “There is,” says the Roman orator, “close by the Agragian port, a vast number of tombs. Examining them with care, I perceived a monument a little elevated above a thicket, whereon was inscribed

the figure of a cylinder and sphere. Immediately I said to the Syracusan nobles who attended me, 'That this must be the tomb of which I was in search.'

'We alighted to take a nearer view of it. In front, is a narrow strip of cultivated, unfenced ground, and just at the entrance, a few brambles and rank weeds are growing. The tomb is excavated from a native bed of rock, the face of which, naturally projecting, is shaped about the opening into a rude Doric front, with pilasters and a pediment. No traces of the inscription are visible, nor is this to be wondered at, for even in the time of Cicero, the characters were partially worn away. The entrance of the tomb is sufficiently high to allow a person of full stature to walk in, without stooping. The interior is of moderate dimensions. It is truly "The dark and narrow house." In a recess on the right, large enough to receive a modern lead coffin, the remains of the philosopher are supposed to have been laid; but the sarcophagus, if any there were, has long since disappeared. On the opposite side, are full-length receptacles for bodies; and fronting the entrance, there are smaller depositories, cut like the others from the solid rock, and adapted for urns, or the coffins of children. The tomb appears to have been the family sepulchre of Archimedes; but the ashes of the human forms, which once filled its niches, have for ages been dispersed to the four winds.

'The hill, at the foot of which this tomb has been opened, is a vast ledge of rock, slightly covered with shrubs and grass. Following the path at its base, I perceived a great many other tombs yawning from its sides, the "*magna frequentia sepulchrorum*" spoken of by Cicero. The street of sepulchres is fitly named; and the spectacle it offers excites in the bosom a train of solemn emotions. Not one of the tombs, throughout the long-drawn range on either hand, retains the bones or even the dust of its ancient occupants. They are all open, despoiled and empty. We talk of the fidelity of the grave; but what can be more faithless? If not invaded by the hand of cupidity and violence, the elements force open its prison doors, and the ashes committed to its trust are suffered to escape. The tenements of the dead are no more permanent possessions, than those of the living. Neither pyramids, catacombs, nor mausoleums, neither tumuli nor cairns, nor barrows, are secure from intrusion and spoliation. What retreat for the dead could seemingly be more safe than one of these cells hewn from a rock, when the stone, as at the first, was rolled to its mouth, and was sealed and made fast? Yet none of them have proved inviolate; and though the bodies originally consigned to them were thought destined to

rest in their "narrow beds" till the heavens be no more, their decomposed and separated particles have entered into new combinations with innumerable other substances, æriform, vegetable or animal. And many generations of the dead might have been successively accommodated in the self-same spots. The Mole of Adrian, and the Pyramid of Cheops are standing witnesses, that the utmost anxiety and sedulousness of mortals to secure places of undisturbed repose for their ashes, are unavailing; nay, that they are the surest means of defeating the builders' aims. The safest sanctuary of the dead, if any may be called secure, is the lone and forgotten grave of a poor Indian, in the depth of some pathless forest.

'We proceeded to the *Latomiæ*. The place so denominated is the hollow or bed of an immense quarry, whence the stone is supposed to have been taken for the structures of Syracuse. The first impression which a sight of it produces, is like that of viewing a vast pile of scattered ruins. An eminence of considerable elevation and ample circuit has been hewn down by the excavations, but leaving on most of the sides an irregular line of the native rock, to serve as an impregnable wall to the enclosure. In the area, some insulated masses are seen of the original quarry, one of which is comparatively lofty, and on the top of it a tower was formerly erected. A remnant of a staircase is still visible near the summit. So effectually are the *Latomiæ* guarded by the lofty natural barricade about them, that in the days of the Syracusan tyrants they were used for a prison. The Athenian army, which surrendered under Nicias, was confined in them, and, according to Diodorus, the sufferings of the captives were so severe, as to make the fate of their brave but unfortunate general, who was barbarously put to death, seem merciful by contrast. This event happened four hundred and thirteen years before the Christian era, and shows the great antiquity of the *Latomiæ*.

'The famous grotto, called the Ear of Dionysius, makes a part of these extraordinary works; but it has been formed in an angle separate from the main body, and is altogether unique in its plan and style of construction. It is a deep, gloomy cavern, which has been wrought out with amazing ingenuity as well as labor, from very hard rock. The entrance,—through a precipice perfectly steep,—resembles the door-way to some old cathedral. The face of the rock is clothed with luxuriant natural creepers, which would give the opening a romantic appearance, if there were not something in the looks of the cavern-gloom almost awful. We explored its recesses with the light of tapers.

'The ground-plan is sinuous, not unlike the letter S. The

roof is vaulted, approaching the style which architects call pointed, and retaining a certain Gothic feature like the form of the entrance. The surface of the walls was made perfectly smooth, and has undergone no change. The cavern is one hundred and ninety feet in length, measured on a curve line equi-distant from the sides. In width it varies from twenty-four to thirty-six feet, and in height from sixty to seventy. It terminates in an elliptical bend. About half way up the cavern on the right, there is an opening to a smaller grotto. Its area is about one tenth of the outer one, and the height of the walls thirty feet. The communication is by a passage rather broad, but it might be barricaded; and if the popular notion be correct, that the Ear of Dionysius was built by the tyrant for a prison, this smaller apartment might have served as the inner ward,—a dungeon doubly guarded.

‘Extraordinary as is the height of the main cavern, it was originally greater. There has been a gradual filling up of the bottom by the wash of earth, leaves, and pebbles from without, but to what depth is not ascertained. Near the top of the cavern, on the right of the entrance, is a small chamber. The opening is in the external front of the rock. Whether a secret passage formerly led to it is not known, but at present it is inaccessible, unless by ladders, or ropes let down from the brink of the precipice. Between the chamber and the cavern, a hole was formerly bored, by order, it is said, of Dionysius, who, according to the legend, used to station himself in the little apartment, for the purpose of hearing the conversation which passed among his prisoners. The tympanum, or focus of sound, was just opposite the chamber. I observed a singular groove in the roof of the rock, running from that point the entire length of the cavern. It is cut with great regularity and smoothness. Its course is not level, but it waves or undulates along the roof, preserving at the same time a reference in its line of direction to the curving sides of the grotto. This groove is supposed to have been contrived as a conductor of sound. The cavern itself is constructed on a plan generally analogous to the form and symmetry of the human ear, and thence has been derived its immemorial appellation.

‘Its echo is astonishing. The faintest whisper may be heard in any part of it. In common conversation, the sound of the voice comes back in heavy intonations. We tried, in several ways, the reverberative power. A paper was gently torn by one of the gentlemen at the upper extremity of the cave, and notwithstanding the extent and sinuosity of the passage, the sound was plainly heard by the others standing without the entrance. A pistol was fired, and the report was like the discharge of an eight-and-forty pounder.

'There is no doubt that the cavern was specially formed for conducting and augmenting sound; but whether it was contrived to enable the cruel tyrant who has the merit of planning it, to hear from his secret apartment the conversation of his prisoners, has been doubted. It is alleged in disproof, that if two or more voices speak at the same time, only a confused clamor is produced. This, which is true below, might not have happened,—at least so sensibly as to be an inconvenience,—to an ear placed at the orifice in the watch-chamber. The tyrant may have been in the habit of only imprisoning a very few subjects at once, and those of whom he was most suspicious; and as they would not be likely always to speak at the same time, and any two, at least, would naturally converse without mutual interruption, enough might be easily gathered by the royal eaves-dropper to help him make up his mind respecting his prisoners' characters, plans or dispositions. Long concurrent tradition, in the absence of positive testimony of a contrary nature, should have considerable weight in determining what the objects of the projector of the cavern really were. Those who deny the vulgar opinion admit, that in remote times the cave was used as a prison; but they assert that it was only appropriated as a receptacle for the dregs of the Sicilian populace.'

In attempting to ascend Mount *Ætna*, Mr. Bigelow, partly from the severity of the weather, and partly from the treachery of a cowardly guide, was exposed to a good deal of personal danger. His account of the matter constitutes one of the most interesting episodes in the work.

'We came next to the *Regione Nemorosa*, whose belt of forests, several miles in width, girdles the entire circumference of the mountain. Here the snow began to annoy us, deepening as we ascended. In one of the several bad plunges, I was flung from the mule, the girths of the saddle, which were none of the stoutest, being broken by the efforts of the animal to recover his footing. The path wound up through volcanic hills, each marking the site of former eruptions, most of which occurred in periods so very remote, that their eras can only be conjectured. At length, we reached the shelter in the forest described in my hasty notes of the morning, and which, from the condition in which we found it, may be appropriately called *Casa delle neve*, a hut of snow. It is situated eight miles above *Nicolosi*, and hard by the upper boundary of the old wood. Having led in our mules, we left them tied, and departed at three o'clock upon our adventures, on foot.

'The atmosphere was more gloomy. The clouds, which had

continued to accumulate, had a mischief-boding aspect. The mountain-top was hid. The moon, sometimes peering through a rent in the lowering sky, threw a fitful gleam along our track. Quitting the forest, we began to traverse the Regione Discoperta, or third zone of the mountain,—a district, which takes its name from its prevalent bareness and sterility, and where, in mid-summer, only a few feeble plants contrive to root themselves and find a scanty nourishment. But at present, every vestige of such partial and scattered vegetation was totally hid with snows. Above the white covering which spread itself over all this upper division of the mountain, precipices of lava in various places lifted their black pinnacles. An active imagination might have traced in some of them, a resemblance to the minarets of a half-buried mosque. As we advanced, peak rose above peak. The mountain seemingly receded; and its blasts, now high, which swept down upon us, appeared determined to forbid and repel every effort to reach its burning throne.

‘The sky in the east “loomed” a little as morning broke, and the hour of sunrise approached. The horizon was streaked with dusky red. The landscape gradually opened, and I could look down from the sublime height which I had gained, on the earth and sea, far, far below. But again the heavens were overcast. The transient hues of the morning sky were veiled with portentous clouds; and above, nothing was seen but deep, thick, murky haze.

‘Walking became difficult. My feet sunk in the snows several inches every step; and sometimes I was obliged to wade in them knee-deep. Filippo was the first to lag. Once he was nearly buried in a pit-fall, which was screened with loose snows, into which he unwarily stepped.—Still we proceeded. The wind had already for an hour been drifting upon us snows from above; and now the clouds began to shower them abundantly, with occasional hail, which drove keenly against our faces. Our progress was more impeded; and it was not without danger, as many precipices were only masked by the snows, down which, by a single mis-step, we might be fatally plunged. The guide murmured; and Filippo began to remonstrate against the further prosecution of the enterprise. But I was desirous of advancing to the utmost attainable point; it was not reached yet. The present was my only opportunity of climbing the mountain; and the proverb applied to Corinth, “non cuivis contigit adire,” was true in respect to *Ætna*. Besides, I did not apprehend any serious personal risk. The very violence of the storm made me think it would ere long blow over. For it had the signs of a fierce snow-squall, such as some-

times happens in a New England winter, the vehemence of which seldom admits of a long duration. And if, from premature discouragement, I should retreat before the blasts, and the sky should afterwards clear, it would then be too fatiguing to recover the ground once abandoned; and to have relinquished it under such circumstances, would be mortifying ever after to remember. Inconveniences there certainly were, but with them I laid my account in the outset; and as for a snow-storm, even a bad one, any American, born north of "Mason's and Dixon's Line," must know something of its power, and be willing for a favorite object to encounter it.

'With Filippo I one while expostulated and reasoned, then laughed at what I called his ridiculous fears, and said he ought to be ashamed not to hold out as long as I could. This carried him on a little further; but he dropped behind, and finally sunk down under the shelter of a crag of lava. When or where he stopped, I knew not at the time, being occupied with the labor of pushing my own upward way. The wind became so violent that, if I paused to breathe, unless taking considerable precaution, I was blown several paces down the steep.

'The guide after a while was very clamorous. He pointed significantly to the quarter whither we were going; and true enough, it was not possible to lift, or at least, to keep one's face in that direction beyond a moment, so great was the power of the tempest. Still, I employed similar remonstrances and representations with him which I had unsuccessfully resorted to with Filippo, to induce him to wait the issue, or rather the signs, of the storm a little longer. He was reminded of what I had myself seen from Syracuse and Catanea, that the top of the mountain would be sometimes covered with deep clouds in a morning, and that before noon they would be all dispersed. The like might happen now. But, no,—he maintained; the present was a settled and furious storm. And as he continued to expatiate, the broken expressions—"Che terribile tempèsta!—Grándina,—névica prodigiosaménte;—Accidenti funesti;—Siámo morti;—Atra, atra tempèsta,"—all implying the energy of the tempest, and his fears of its effects,—these, and others were imperfectly heard, amid the howling of the winds. "Básta; paziénza. Bisógna ésser' ardito; che aspettíamo?"—(Enough of this; cheer up and come on,)—said I. "Cosi siá, Signor,"—(so be it,)—he replied,—intimating his consent to wait the weather a few minutes longer. But there was a sulkiness in his acquiescence, which I did not relish. To encourage him and not doubting his fidelity, whatever were his wishes, I turned and led the way. He followed. Having proceeded some distance,

I looked back and beheld, with astonishment, the fellow running down the mountain. At first, I thought it a mere device to make me desist from further attempts to ascend, and to frighten me into a retreat; for I could not believe, that he meant to desert me altogether. I called to him to stop. It availed not. I ran after him. He only redoubled his pace, and darted downwards with the speed of an Indian. In a few moments more, he was out of sight. Once, shortly after, in an effort to overtake him, I faintly descried his figure through the storm, as he was pursuing his flight; but it was a transient glimpse and he was gone.—There was a spice of treachery in this. The fellow had fled, cowardly fled, giving me at the time no warning of his intention, or the chance of escape by keeping him in view, if the descent had become at length indispensable. But be that as it may, my own situation was none the better, and a more critical one may not easily be imagined. I was alone, far up on a mountain difficult of access in the most favorable circumstances, but now clothed with snows and beset with tempests. Miles intervened between me and that hut I had left in the forest below. If I looked downwards, I could see nothing but the raging of the storm; and if I turned an eye to the cliffs on either side, I beheld whole banks of snow uplifted and blown through the air, filling and darkening it, along with the sleety showers then falling from the clouds. The scene was, indeed, tremendous. The atmosphere had assumed a character of inexpressible wildness. It seemed as if the skies were wrecked, and every thing around were participating in the mighty ruin.—My apprehensions were, that I should be so completely overtaken with the quantities of descending and drifting snows, as to be soon unable to proceed, and that perish I must amid their accumulating masses. The thought of this, not the most welcome, glanced through my mind, when the guide had finally vanished. I looked on his receding form, with the sensations that a mariner, lost overboard in a gale, must view the ship whence he was precipitated, holding on her course, nor proffering him the least assistance to give him a rescue from impending death.

‘But the exigency called for action. I made what haste I could in descending, sometimes almost buried in heaps of snow, at others slipping on a glacier which was only slightly covered, and sliding rapidly downwards till stopped by a crag or ridge. I was encouraged by the recollection, that I had taken a pocket-compass from Nicolosi; and it occurred to me, that if the storm should abate, or my strength hold out till reaching the forest, I could, with the general impression which I had of the bearing of Catanea and the villages this side, on the skirt of *Ætna*, find

my way to some shelter. As for the hovel in the woods, I entertained no hope of reaching it; and in respect to Filippo and the renegade guide, I dreamed not of seeing them again upon the mountain. But how slender the former hope! How many intervening dangers from precipices and pitfalls,—from the fury of the storm, and the fast deepening snows;—and if the forest could be gained, as no house was there, would my remaining vigor enable me in season to thread a passage through it? Weighing well the circumstances, I was soon convinced of one thing, that the effort at precipitate haste in descending would be unwise, by causing a premature waste of strength, exclusive of the greater perils which it might occasion by falls and other accidents; and I resolved to proceed with the requisite caution, leaving the event to the disposal of that power whose presence is always nigh, and whose arm was competent to screen from the “windy storm and tempest.”

‘So near as I could judge, twenty-five minutes had elapsed after the flight of the guide,—and a much longer time it seemed,—when, pursuing my course, I heard on my right and from a point quite aside from the route I was then taking, a call, which was almost overpowered by the storm. I could see no one. The hail was repeated, and I immediately turned in its direction. It was the voice of Filippo. When I reached the spot, he was in a narrow cleft at the foot of two steep ridges of the mountain, between which I had gone on the ascent; but I had forgotten the track, and there were no marks of footsteps to show it, for the prints were obliterated almost as soon as made. The fellow was covered,—face, dress, every thing,—with ice and snow, so that in color he was scarcely distinguishable from the drifts in which he stood. He had discerned my person, in consequence of the snows having been pretty effectually shaken off in the rough falls which had been encountered; and when seen, I was walking in a path elevated to his eye, at a moment when the thickness of the weather happened just transiently to abate. In general, during the tempest, an object could not be seen fifty paces distant. Filippo was evidently so exhausted, that I was willing to forgive his desertion. But the conduct of the guide I regarded very differently. And there the recreant stood, stationed near to Filippo,—one moment looking doubtfully at me,—then casting a glance up the mountain, and next turning it aside, as though eager to resume his downward run.’

At Messina Mr. Bigelow was received with much kindness by the Consul, Mr. Payson, and his amiable family. In describing his excursions in the neighborhood of this city, our

author introduces a curious dissertation on the present appearance of the Straits of Messina and of the celebrated Rock and Whirlpool, which were anciently supposed to render them one of the most dangerous passages in the world. We venture to extract a part of his remarks on this subject.

‘Yesterday, I made an excursion with some friends to the Faro Point. It is situated seven or eight miles to the north of Messina. Near the Point is a small village. Its position, which is its only recommendation, is very fine. The country back of it is exceedingly fruitful, particularly in vines; and it presents a most pleasing aspect. The Rock of Scylla is distant just three miles and two fifths from the Faro. They are not the two nearest parts of Calabria and Sicily. About midway between Messina and the Point, the channel is narrowed to the bare breadth of two miles and a third. Scylla is a naked gray rock, rising something in the form of a tower, lofty only in proportion to the base. It has a castle on the top. The crag projects, or rather juts, from the shore, with which it is united by a short, sandy isthmus. Unquestionably, it would be a bad mark for a ship to fetch up against; but not worse than a thousand other rocks, points, bluffs and headlands, on numerous other shores. I surveyed it with a good glass, and saw nothing in its appearance, or in the neighborhood, particularly remarkable.

‘But from the earliest period of history, Scylla has been considered a rock of peculiar peril. Are we to discredit all the accounts of the ancients? Or have the phenomena of the Straits,—the Faro di Messina,—been essentially modified and changed in later times, so as to reduce the dangers of navigation? To answer these inquiries, it will be necessary to look to other matters in connexion.

‘We must bear in mind, that the horrors ascribed to Scylla rest mainly on the authority of the ancient poets; and they have been quite as liberal, in the terrific attributes which they have assigned to Charybdis. The proverb,

“Incidit in Scyllam, qui vult vitare Charybdim,”

—he dashes on Scylla, who strives to shun Charybdis,—was intended to imply, that the accident might be reciprocal, and that the peril of both was most appalling. It is true, a very few of the graver historians of antiquity,—among them, Strabo and Sallust,—coincided in part with the poets, in their descriptions of the Rock and Whirlpool. But they were willing, perhaps, to swim with the current, and to take up on credit what had been so often and confidently asserted; and, after all, their ac-

counts are moderate in comparison with the representations of bards, such as Ovid, Lucretius, Virgil and Homer. Now, every one understands what is meant by "poetic license." Fiction and exaggeration are the special privileges of the Muse; and to reduce the statements of her scribes to sober truth, we must begin with making a very heavy discount.

'Charybdis, from its proximity to Messina, I have had a better opportunity of observing, than, as yet, has been offered me of Scylla. It lies only a furlong from the shore, abreast of the right arm, or horn, of the harbor. I have looked at it both before and since my ride to the Faro, have watched the movement and set of the currents, and examined, with some attention, the form and aspect of the neighboring shores. I was desirous of ascertaining, whether the present appearance of things corresponds with what was reported by the ancients; or, if different, whether there be circumstances, which render it probable that natural causes, operating through a series of ages, have effected any, or a material, alteration. The weather having been uninterruptedly serene, it has not been my good fortune to witness the action of the waves, eddies and currents, as they are exhibited during a storm; but I have gathered satisfactory information from those, to whom the spectacle is familiar. Taking into view all circumstances, the result is a full impression in my mind, not only that the phenomena of the Straits remain substantially as they existed in the earliest historic age, but that the terrors ascribed to the navigation of this celebrated Pass,—whether from the main currents, or the collateral agencies of Scylla and Charybdis,—if not solely the creatures of poetic fancy, have much the character of that species of trumpery. This may appear a bold conclusion, in the eyes of the partisan disciples of the Homeric school; it remains for me to show, that if bold, it is defensible.

'Homer, who set the tune to which so many have chimed, represents Scylla as a sublime cloud-piercing cliff, hiding its head by its very loftiness in a region of perpetual mists.—It is a rock two hundred feet high, on which, during each of the three days I have been in sight of it, the sun has shone with merry beams, and its form and mass show incontestably that no changes in nature could affect or diminish it, other than what would wear down the "everlasting hills." Homer describes the sides of Scylla as so steep and slippery, that no mortal could climb them, "though borne by twenty feet, though armed with twenty hands."—A small fortress is erected on the summit; and from its walls on the south, a village begins, which extends to its base and stretches along the neck of land connecting it

with the continent, a part of the buildings of which are visible from Messina. Homer speaks of Charybdis as close to Scylla, and overlooked by it.

“Beneath, Charybdis holds her boisterous reign
’Midst roaring whirlpools, and absorbs the main.”

—I have said that the latter is just outside of the port of Messina. Its centre, in a water-line, cannot be less than eight or nine miles from the Poet’s Rock. And how can this be explained by Homer’s mensuration of the space, who compares it to an arrow’s flight? Charybdis is not even opposite to Scylla. It lies in a slanting line, further to the south. But, its position has changed since times of yore?—Thucydides, who wrote more than four hundred years before the Christian era, places it between Messina and Rhegium, just where it now is; and Strabo affirms that it is situated a little in front of Messina,—*μικρὸν προ τῆς πόλεως*. In fact, Charybdis, in its relation to those two places, makes the apex of a triangle, the base of which runs from Scylla to Reggio. As on this point, the poet and historian are completely at issue, the inquirer after plain, sober truth can be at no loss to whom he shall award his confidence. Again, the only navigable part of the Straits, according to Homer, Virgil and others, not only ran directly between the Rock and Whirlpool, but it was the narrowest possible pass, even in reference to such small galleys as their heroes respectively sailed in.—Modern navigators find the channel, where most confined, to be more than two miles wide; and the distance from Rock to Gulf is computed at full three leagues.’

The subject is pursued at considerably greater length, but we have not room to quote the remainder of the passage. At Messina our author embarked for Naples, and at this point he closes the present narrative. His visit to the continent has doubtless supplied him with copious materials for future works, which we hope, on some other occasion, to have the pleasure of introducing to the reader’s notice.